

Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached replacement drawing sheets make changes to Figs. 1A-1C, 2B, 4A, 5C, 7B and 8B and replace the original sheets with Figs. 1A-1C, 2B, 4A, 5C, 7B and 8B.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 are pending in this application.

By this Amendment, Figs. 1A-1C, 2B, 4A, 5C, 7B and 8B are amended to be designated as "prior art," as the Examiner suggested. No new matter is added.

Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested in light of the following remarks.

The Office Action objects to the drawings. The drawings are amended, as outlined above. Accordingly, withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-5 and 7-11 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over WO 03/011427 to Hamanaka in view of WO 2002/079618 to Hijikata. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Office Action asserts that Hamanaka discloses in Fig. 5 a honeycomb structure characterized by: (1) center segments ("first honeycomb segments"), (2) "second honeycomb segments" arranged in the periphery of the center segments, and (3) the center segments being separated by flow channel separator. The Office Action asserts that Hamanaka also discloses that the segment with 35mm sides should be adjusted in its size for obtaining an ideal pressure loss (page 5, paragraph [0060]).

The Office Action recognizes that Hamanaka does not disclose honeycomb segments bonded by a bonding material, but asserts in Hijikata (WO 2002/079618), the segments are separated by bonding material (col. 4, lines 49-52). The Office Action further asserts that one of ordinary skill would have been motivated to combine the teachings of Hijikata with the teachings of Hamanaka to render obvious the subject matter recited in claim 1. However, one of ordinary skill would not have had any reason to try and combine the teachings of Hamanaka and Hijikata.

Hamanaka describes the idea that the segments are being separated by the flow channel separator, not by a bond layer. Therefore the idea of Hamanaka's differs from the idea of the claimed invention that segments having different cross sectional area are bonded together by the bond layer. In particular, Hamanaka discloses "the flow channel separator in the present application is different from a bond layer formed for bonding a segmented/divided honeycomb structure, and the bond layer is excluded from the flow channel separator of the present application."

In above regard, the center segment indicated by the Examiner's Fig. 15 of Hamanaka is a part separated by the flow channel separator, and Hamanaka does not reflect the idea of "bonding segments having different cross sectional area together."

In view of the above, the teachings of Hamanaka are incompatible with the teachings of Hijikata. Thus, one of ordinary skill would not have had any reason to combine Hijikata with Hamanaka.

For the above reasons, the Office Action fails to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness. Accordingly, the rejection of claim 1 over the combination of Hamanaka and Hijikata is without merits.

The rejection of claims 2-5 and 7-11 also lacks merits in view of the patentability of claim 1 over the applied references, as well as for the additional features they recite. For example, Hamanaka and Hijikata do not disclose or suggest the "pressure loss" feature recited in claims 7-11, as discussed below.

Regarding the pressure loss, Hamanaka describes "when the cross sectional area of the segment is too large, the area of separator for the cross sectional area becomes large accordingly. The large area of separator for the cross sectional area leads high pressure loss which is not preferable." Therefore, the description in Hamanaka (the increase in the pressure loss occurred by increasing the area of separator) is different in content from the main point

of an embodiment of the present application, "changing the segment size." Thus, Hamanaka does not disclose or render obvious the "pressure loss" feature recited in claims 7-11.

Also, Hijikata does not cure the deficiencies of Hamanaka. In particular, Hijikata merely discloses that the segments are separated by the bonding material. Hijikata does not disclose or suggest the above-discussed "pressure loss" feature recited in claims 7-11. Thus, the combination of Hamanaka and Hijikata does not disclose or render obvious the subject matter recited in claims 7-11.

For at least the above reasons, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-5 and 7-11 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 6 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Hamanaka and Hijikata in view of WO 03/021089 to Kondo. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Kondo merely describes kinds of the cross sectional shape. Kondo does not supply the subject matter lacking in Hamanaka and Hijikata. Thus, the applied references, either individually or in combination, do not disclose or suggest the subject matter recited in claim 1, and claims 6 and 12 depending therefrom. Accordingly, withdrawal of the rejection of claims 6 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) is respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-12 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachments:
Replacement Sheets

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